

The
April 2007

EMA Report

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY

VOLUME I, NUMBER 6



(Far left) Barb Flannigan, NBC4, reports outside the FCEM&HS office on the statewide tornado safety drill. Shawn Holmes records Warning Manager, Art Baker as he activates the sirens. The test, which included voice messaging, lasted five minutes.

All Sirens Function During Tornado Drill

A few worried Franklin County residents raced to their phones yesterday morning when the tornado sirens blared.

"It's Ok," reassured officials at county Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Yesterday [28 March] was Tornado Drill Day in Ohio, and most sirens wailed a loud warning as a test.

During a true weather emergency, the system would sound for three minutes followed by three minutes of silence. Activation would continue until the National Weather Service cancels the warning.

Voice messaging is used only in a sheltering in place or for an evacuation.

All of the county's 146 sirens sounded at 9:50 a.m., but eight were a bit muffled.

"We have speaker driver problems with six (older) speakers and two new ones," said the agency's Art Baker.

"The ground has been so wet, we haven't been able to get our trucks to them. One is out in the middle of a field. The sirens work; they're just not as loud as we want."

The sirens scheduled for repairs: one in Upper Arlington, two in Worthington, two in Grove City, one in Pleasant Township, one in Norwich Township and one in Clintonville.

Baker said they had a handful of calls from those unaware of the midmorning, statewide test. The county traditionally tests sirens only at noon Wednesdays, weather permitting. They are activated for 15 seconds, followed by 30 seconds of silence, and then activated again for 15 seconds.

One call worried Baker, though. Officials at a school, he didn't catch the name, called to say they hadn't heard the sirens. They had a free weather-alert radio like those provided to all public schools in the county.

"But you've got to turn it on," Baker noted.

Weather radios are available at most department or electronic stores. It is also a good idea to keep a battery-powered radio on hand in case your electricity goes off.

The weather radios can be programmed to go off only when a warning is broadcast and cost about \$35 at stores, he said.

Courtesy The Columbus Dispatch

A field exercise, which mobilized and deployed multiple police, fire and Emergency Medical Service units, was conducted March 8 at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base. The Ohio Department of Public Safety and Ohio Fire Chiefs Association activated the Ohio Emergency Response Plan.

The exercise demonstrated mutual aid response procedures should a natural or manmade disaster occur which would require emergency resources to cross jurisdictional lines.





Teresa Long, MD

Teresa C. Long, M.D., M.P.H. became the first female Health Commissioner for Columbus in 2002. She was appointed to the post by Mayor Michael B. Coleman and the Columbus Board of Health. Prior to this appointment she served as Medical Director and Assistant Health Commissioner for the Columbus Health Department from 1986 until 2002.

As Health Commissioner, Dr. Long is responsible for assuring adequate public health protection for the citizens of Columbus and oversees all operations of the Columbus Health Department.

Prior to coming to Columbus, Dr. Long served on the front lines of the emerging AIDS epidemic as a physician specialist with the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Dr. Long is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health.

"As an emergency management executive committee member and Columbus Health Commissioner, I am particularly interested," Dr. Long said, "in the agency's pandemic influenza community plans and response to a possible outbreak."

She was the first recipient of the Elizabeth Blackwell Award for Pioneering Efforts to Improve Women's and Community Health. She holds a Doctor of Medicine Degree from the University of California – San Francisco and a Master of Public Health from the University of California – Berkeley.

Editor's Note: Each edition we feature an Executive Committee member and profile their duties and vision for FCEM&HS. Mysheika LeMaile-Williams, MD is the alternate.

Meteorologist Ben Gelber, NBC4, takes a question during the annual Tornado and Severe Weather Spotter Seminar, March 17. Spotters provide essential information for all types of environmental hazards, however, the main responsibility of a spotter is to report severe local storms.

More than 60 attended the three-hour event held at the FCEM&HS agency. John Montgomery, Central Ohio Severe Weather Net; Ken Haydu, National Weather Service — Wilmington, Ohio; and Art Baker, Warning Manager, FCEM&HS led the presentations.



Upcoming Meetings

April 3	9AM	Exercise Design	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 4	10AM	Homeland Security Advisory Committee	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 5	1:30PM	800 MHz (Safety)	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 10	9AM	Franklin County Fire Chiefs Association	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 10	1:30PM	800 MHz (Service)	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 11	1-2PM	Messaging Committee	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 11	1:30PM	800 MHz (Advisory)	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 11	2-3PM	Central Ohio Public Information Network	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 17	2-3PM	Special Needs (Non English Speaking) Subcommittee	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 18	1-4PM	9-1-1 Managers	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 19	10AM	Assoc. of Public Safety Communications Officials	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 20	10AM	Central Ohio Regional Interoperability Committee	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 20	2PM	American Red Cross of Greater Columbus	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 24	2PM	Chemical Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.
April 25	9AM	Columbus Public Schools	5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.



Gary L. Holland, Director

Jim Leonard, EM-Recovery/Communications

Art Baker, EM Warning/EOC

Robert Crockett, PIO/Community Education Outreach

www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs

Donna Monell, Deputy Director

Jan Bartel, Finance

Pam Tickle, Administrative Assistant



Dialogue with a Community

By Gary L. Holland

Defining and Conversing with the Special Needs Population in Franklin County, Ohio

Lisette Estrada is a homemaker, born in Spain and raised in the U.S.

Married to a dentist, she is a former journalist, teacher, translator, and felt a “responsibility to work with the less advantaged.” When she was invited to a meeting of an action committee representing various ethnic groups with limited English speaking skills, brought together by the county emergency management agency, she found her seat among the 40 people who attended the organizing sessions.

She is the symbol of collaboration within a segment of our community that had little voice in past emergency planning efforts.

Franklin County had already suffered two disasters: a debilitating ice storm and electrical blackout in late 2004 and a tragic apartment fire earlier that year. The attendant failures and complaints raised critical issues about the completeness of local emergency planning. There is general acknowledgement that a different approach was required.

A simplified model is embodied in the creation of a “Special Needs Population Advisory Committee,” divided into five uniting groups or subcommittees characterized by functional disability, socioeconomic condition, or disease limitations.

Special Populations Defined

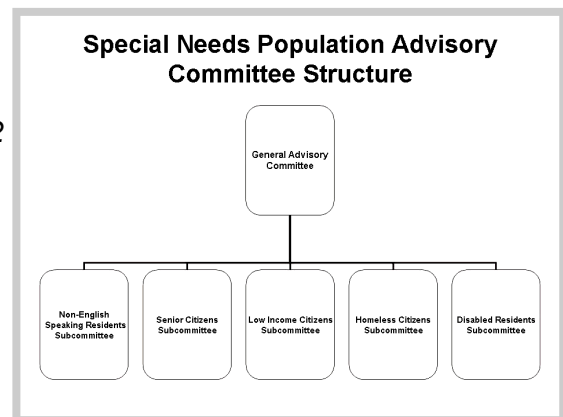
The 2005 Census Bureau Report for Franklin County, Ohio estimates 1,090,771 residents now live within its 542 square mile border.

A closer analysis reveals persons 65 years and older constitute 9.8 percent of the county population; Asian (3.6%); Hispanic or Latino (3.1%); foreign born (6%); language other than English spoken at home (9%); persons with a disability (6.5%); those living below the poverty line (11.6%); and approximately 7,000 homeless citizens.

Government agencies, private community resources, neighboring jurisdictions, profit and non profit organizations were contacted and roundtable discussions on crisis planning for all populations were examined. This segmentation was done to distinguish populations by functional needs during an evacuation or sheltering crisis and to weave their plights into every aspect of disaster planning.

Who are the county’s disadvantaged or vulnerable populations and what are their unique needs? I identified five groups: Non-English Speaking Residents, Disabled Residents, Homeless Citizens, Senior Citizens and Low Income Citizens. Relying on the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCЕМ&HS) staff, we launched relevant subcommittees (see chart above) to explore those needs.

Part II, May Edition



Ohio Department of Public Safety Director, **Henry Guzmán** and FCEM&HS Director, **Gary L. Holland**.

Ohio Department of Safety Director Henry Guzmán turned over keys to a new \$376,278 interoperability vehicle to Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes, March 19.

Funded by the US Department of Homeland Security, the custom built vehicle serves seven counties in central Ohio in the event of a major weather disaster, terrorist attack, hostage or hazardous material incident. It has state of the art communications equipment and technology for first responders.

The County Commissioners were present at the Franklin County Fleet Management Office and highlighted benefits the vehicle will bring to the county.